

## Chapter 2: Planning Process

### 2 Documenting the Planning Process

Documentation of the planning process, including public involvement, is required to meet FEMA's DMA 2000 (44CFR§201.4(c)(1) and §201.6(c)(1)). This section includes a description of the planning process used to develop this plan, including how it was prepared, who was involved in the process, and how all of the involved agencies participated.

#### 2.1.1 Description of the Planning Process

The Valley County Wildland-Urban Interface Wildfire Mitigation Plan was developed through a collaborative process involving all of the organizations and agencies detailed in Section 1.0 of this document. The County's local coordinator contacted these organizations directly to invite their participation and schedule meetings of the planning committee. The planning process included 5 distinct phases which were in some cases sequential (step 1 then step 2) and in some cases intermixed (step 4 completed though out the process):

1. **Collection of Data** about the extent and periodicity of wildfires in and around Valley County. This included an area encompassing Adams, Gem, Payette, Washington, and Valley Counties to insure a robust dataset for making inferences about fires in Valley County specifically; this included a wildfire extent and ignition profile.
2. **Field Observations and Estimations** about wildfire risks including fuels assessments, juxtaposition of structures and infrastructure to wildland fuels, access, and potential treatments by trained wildfire specialists.
3. **Mapping** of data relevant to wildfire control and treatments, structures, resource values, infrastructure, fire prone landscapes, and related data.
4. **Facilitation of Public Involvement** from the formation of the planning committee, to a public mail survey, news releases, public meetings, public review of draft documents, and acceptance of the final plan by the signatory representatives.
5. **Analysis and Drafting of the Report** to integrate the results of the planning process, providing ample review and integration of committee and public input, followed by acceptance of the final document.

Planning efforts were led by the Project Director, Dr. William E. Schlosser, of Northwest Management, Inc. Dr. Schlosser holds 4 degrees in natural resource management (A.S. geology; B.S. forest and range management; M.S. natural resource economic & finance; Ph.D. environmental science and regional planning). Valley County Clerk, Leland Heinrich, was the County's Coordinator instrumental for pulling together the planning team which worked to complete this plan. This team of resource professionals that included fire mitigation specialists, wildfire control specialists, resource management professionals, and hazard mitigation experts.

They were the point-people to share data and information with during the plan's development. They and the planning team met with many residents of the county during the inspections of communities, infrastructure, and hazard abatement assessments. This methodology, when coupled with the other approaches in this process, worked effectively to integrate a wide spectrum of observations and interpretations about the project.

The planning philosophy employed in this project included the open and free sharing of information with interested parties. Information from federal and state agencies was integrated

into the database of knowledge used in this project. Meetings with the committee were held throughout the planning process to facilitate a sharing of information between cooperators.

When the public meetings were held, many of the committee members were in attendance and shared their support and experiences with the planning process and their interpretations of the results.

## **2.2 Public Involvement**

Public involvement in this plan was made a priority from the inception of the project. There were a number of ways that public involvement was sought and facilitated. In some cases this led to members of the public providing information and seeking an active role in protecting their own homes and businesses, while in other cases it led to the public becoming more aware of the process without becoming directly involved in the planning process.

### **2.2.1 News Releases**

Under the auspices of the Valley County Wildland-Urban Interface Wildfire Mitigation Planning Committee, news releases were submitted to area news papers and radio during the planning process.

#### **2.2.1.1 Radio Messages**

A short news release was aired over the **KMCL** radio station the week prior to the public meetings announcing the goals of the planning committee, the purpose of the mitigation plan, the date and times of public meetings, and contact information.

#### **2.2.1.2 Newspaper Articles**

Committee and public meeting announcements were published in local newspapers ahead of each meeting. The following is an example of one of the newspaper announcements that ran in the local newspaper.

#### **Valley County Plans to Mitigate Wildfire Risk**

**Cascade, Idaho**—The Valley County Commissioners have created a Wildfire Mitigation Plan Committee to complete a Wildfire Mitigation Plan for Valley County as part of the National Fire Plan authorized by congress and the Whitehouse. The Valley County Fire Mitigation Plan will include risk analysis at the community level with predictive models for where fires are likely to ignite and where they are likely to spread rapidly once ignited. Northwest Management, Inc. has been retained by Valley County to provide wildfire risk assessments, mapping, field inspections, interviews, and to collaborate with the committee to prepare the plan. The coordination for this effort is being provided by Lee Heinrich, Valley County Clerk. The committee includes rural and wildland fire districts, land managers from SITPA, the IDL, the US Forest Service, the BLM, elected officials, businesses, and others. Specialists on the committee are conducting analysis of fire prone landscapes and making recommendations for potential treatments. Specific activities for homes, structures, infrastructure, and resource capabilities will be proposed as part of the analysis.

One of the most important steps in gathering information about fire risk in Valley County is to conduct a homeowner's survey. Northwest Management, Inc., in cooperation with local fire officials, have mailed a brief survey to randomly selected homeowners in the

county seeking details about home construction materials, proximity to water sources, and other risk factors surrounding homes. This survey is very important to the success of the plan. Those homes that receive a survey are asked to please take the time to complete it thereby benefiting the community overall.

The planning team will be conducting Public Meetings to discuss preliminary findings and to seek public involvement in the planning process in March. A notice on the date and location of these meetings will be posted in local newspapers. For more information on the Fire Mitigation Plan project in Valley County contact your County Commissioner, Northwest Management, Inc. project director Dr. William Schlosser (208) 883-4488, or the Valley County Clerk Lee Heinrich at (208)382-7100.

## **2.2.2 Public Mail Survey**

In order to collect a broad base of perceptions about wildland fire and individual risk factors of homeowners in Valley County, a mail survey was conducted. Using a state and county database of landowners in Valley County, homeowners from the Wildland-Urban Interface surrounding each community were identified. In order to be included in the database, individuals were selected that own property and have a dwelling in Valley County, as well as a mailing address in Valley County. This database created a list of 1,476 unique names to which was affixed a random number that determined to the probability of being selected for the public mail survey. A total of 234 landowners were mailed surveys.

The public mail survey developed for this project has been used in the past by Northwest Management, Inc., during the execution of other WUI Wildfire Mitigation Plans. The survey used The Total Design Method (Dillman 1978) as a model to schedule the timing and content of letters sent to the selected recipients. Copies of each cover letter, mail survey, and communication are included in Appendix III.

The first in the series of mailing was sent February 18, 2004, and included a cover letter, a survey, and an offer of receiving a custom GIS map of the area of their selection in Valley County if they would complete and return the survey. The free map incentive was tied into assisting their community and helping their interests by participating in this process. Each letter also informed residents about the planning process. A return self-addressed envelope was included in each packet. A postcard reminder was sent to the non-respondents on February 25, 2004, encouraging their response. A final mailing, with a revised cover letter pleading with them to participate, was sent to non-respondents on March 4, 2004.

Surveys were returned during the months of February through May. A total of 176 residents responded to the survey (as of May 19, 2004 – this will be updated until the final plan is completed). No surveys were returned as undeliverable. The effective response rate for this survey was 75%. Statistically, this response rate allows the interpretation of all of the response variables significantly at the 99% confidence level.

### **2.2.2.1 Survey Results**

A summary of the survey's results will be presented here and then referred back to during the ensuing discussions on the need for various treatments, education, and other information.

All of the respondents have a home in Valley County, and 98% consider this their primary residence (although the survey did not ask how much of each year is spent in their Valley County residence). About 28% of the respondents were from the McCall area, 24% were from

the Cascade area, 17% were from the Donnelly area, 16% from Lakefork, and 4% from Yellow Pine, with the remainder from other communities scattered across the county.

Virtually all of the respondents (98%) correctly identified that they have emergency telephone 911 services in their area. The ability of respondents to correctly identify if they are covered by a city or rural fire district was exceptionally good. Respondents were asked to identify if their home is protected by a rural or city fire district. Many of the county's residents have rural or city fire protection. Of the respondents, 86% correctly identified they live in an area protected by a rural or city fire district. Only 2% responded they do not have a fire district covering their home, when in fact they do. Approximately 3% of the respondents indicated that they were outside of a fire protection district when in reality they are inside of a protection district. The additional 10% of the respondents indicated they believe they are outside of a protection district, and in fact, they are correct. These results would indicate that only 5% of the county's residents are incorrect about their belief concerning fire district coverage of their home. This compares very favorable in comparison to other counties in the region and in Idaho where the incorrect responses might approach 25% of the households sampled.

Respondents were asked to indicate the type of roofing material covering the main structure of their home. Approximately 13% of respondents indicated their homes were covered with a composite material (asphalt shingles). About 81% indicated their home were covered with a metal (eg., aluminum, tin) roofing material. Roughly 4% of the respondents indicated they have a wooden roofing material such as shakes or shingles. The additional 3% of respondents had a variety of combustible and non-combustible materials indicated.

Residents were asked to evaluate the proximity of trees within certain distances of their homes. Often, the density of trees around a home is an indicator of increased fire risk. The results are presented in Table 2.1.

**Table 2.1 Survey responses indicating the proximity of trees to homes.**

<b>Number of Trees</b>	<b>Within 250 feet of your home</b>	<b>Within 75 feet of your home</b>
None	3%	5%
Less than 10	17%	34%
Between 10 and 25	26%	40%
More than 25	54%	21%

Approximately 75% of those returning the survey indicated they have a lawn surrounding their home. Of these individual homesites, 94% indicated they keep this lawn green through the fire season.

The average driveway length of the respondents was approximately 370 feet long, from their main road to their parking area. Roughly 28% of the respondents had a driveway over ½ mile long, and a corresponding 54% had a driveway over ¼ of a mile long. Of these homes with lengthy driveways, roughly 50% have turnouts allowing two vehicles to pass each other in the case of an emergency. Approximately 68% of all homeowners indicated they have an alternative escape route, with the remaining 32% indicating only one-way-in and one-way-out.

Nearly all respondents (99%) indicated they have some type of tools to use against a wildfire that threatens their home. Table 2.2 summarizes these responses.

**Table 2.2. Percent of homes with indicated fire fighting tools in Valley County.**

99% – Hand tools (shovel, Pulaski, etc.)

9% – Portable water tank

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**Table 2.2. Percent of homes with indicated fire fighting tools in Valley County.**

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14% – Stationery water tank

46% – Pond, lake, or stream water supply close

23% – Water pump and fire hose

22% – Equipment suitable for creating fire breaks (bulldozer, cat, skidder, etc.)

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Roughly 38% of the respondents in Valley County indicated they have someone in their household trained in wildland fire fighting. Approximately 16% indicated someone in the household had been trained in structural fire fighting. However, it is important to note that these questions did not specify a standard nor did it refer to how long ago the training was received.

A couple of questions in the survey related to on-going fire mitigation efforts households may be implementing. Respondents were asked if they conduct a periodic fuels reduction program near their homesites, such as grass or brush burning. Approximately 78% answered affirmative to this question, while 34% responded that livestock (cattle, horses, sheep) graze the grasses and forbs around their home sites.

Respondents were asked to complete a fuel hazard rating worksheet to assess their home's fire risk rating. An additional column titled "results" has been added to the table, showing the percent of respondents circling each rating (Table 2.3).

Circle the ratings in each category that best describes your home.

Table 2.3. Fuel Hazard Rating Worksheet		Rating	Results
<b>Fuel Hazard</b>	Small, light fuels (grasses, forbs, weeds, shrubs)	1	42%
	Medium size fuels (brush, large shrubs, small trees)	2	28%
	Heavy, large fuels (woodlands, timber, heavy brush)	3	30%
<b>Slope Hazard</b>	Mild slopes (0-5%)	1	69%
	Moderate slope (6-20%)	2	24%
	Steep Slopes (21-40%)	3	6%
	Extreme slopes (41% and greater)	4	1%
<b>Structure Hazard</b>	Noncombustible roof and noncombustible siding materials	1	15%
	Noncombustible roof and combustible siding material	3	74%
	Combustible roof and noncombustible siding material	7	3%
	Combustible roof and combustible siding materials	10	7%
<b>Additional Factors</b>	Rough topography that contains several steep canyons or ridges	+2	Average -2.3 pts
	Areas having history of higher than average fire occurrence	+3	
	Areas exposed to severe fire weather and strong winds	+4	
	Areas with existing fuel modifications or usable fire breaks	-3	
	Areas with local facilities (water systems, rural fire districts, dozers)	-3	

#### Calculating your risk

Values below are the average response value to each question.

$$\begin{array}{rcl}
 \text{Fuel hazard} & \underline{1.9} & \times \text{Slope Hazard } \underline{1.4} = \underline{2.6} \\
 \text{Structural hazard} & + & \underline{3.4} \\
 \text{Additional factors (+ or -)} & & \underline{-2.3} \\
 \text{Total Hazard Points} & = & \underline{3.7}
 \end{array}$$

**Table 2.4. Percent of respondents in each risk category as determined by the survey respondents.**

00% – Extreme Risk = 26 + points
03% – High Risk = 16–25 points
17% – Moderate Risk = 6–15 points
80% – Low Risk = 6 or less points

Maximum household rating form score was 19 points, as assessed by the homeowners. These numbers were compared to observations made by field crews trained in wildland fire fighting. These results indicate that for the most part, these indications are only slightly lower than the risk rating assigned by the “professionals”. Anecdotal evidence would indicate that Valley

County landowners involved in this survey have a more realistic view of wildfire risk than the landowners in other Idaho counties where these questions have been asked.

Finally, respondents were asked “if offered in your area, would members of your household attend a free, or low cost, one-day training seminar designed to teach homeowners in the wildland–urban interface how to improve the defensible space surrounding your home and adjacent outbuildings?” A majority of the respondents, 69% indicated a desire to participate in this type of training.

Homeowners were also asked, “How do you feel Wildland-Urban Interface Fire Mitigation projects should be funded in the areas surrounding homes, communities, and infrastructure such as power lines and major roads?” Responses are summarized in Table 2.5.

**Table 2.5. Public Opinion of Wildfire Mitigation Funding Preferences.**

	Mark the box that best applies to your preference		
	100% Public Funding	Cost-Share (Public & Private)	Privately Funded (Owner or Company)
<b>Home Defensibility Projects →</b>	27%	42%	32%
<b>Community Defensibility Projects →</b>	44%	55%	1%
<b>Infrastructure Projects Roads, Bridges, Power Lines, Etc. →</b>	70%	16%	13%

### 2.2.3 Committee Meetings

The following list of people who participated in the planning committee meetings, volunteered time, or responded to elements of the Valley County Wildland-Urban Interface Wildfire Mitigation Plan’s preparation.

- Greg Bassler .....Northwest Management, Inc.
- Tyler Bentley .....USDA Forest Service
- Toby Brown .....Northwest Management, Inc.
- Tera Duman .....Northwest Management, Inc.
- James Haas .....Cascade Rural Fire District
- Lee Heinrich .....Valley County Clerk
- Ken Homik.....Northwest Management, Inc.
- Ronn Julian .....USDA Forest Service
- John Lillehaug .....Idaho Department of Lands
- Jeff Luff .....USDA Forest Service
- John McGee.....Northwest Management, Inc.
- Dusty Pence.....USDA Forest Service
- Gary Phillips .....USDA Forest Service
- William E. Schlosser .....Northwest Management, Inc.

- Steve Stuebner .....Tamarack Resort
- Richard Taplin .....Ponderosa State Park
- Leo VanHoover .....Yellow Pine Resident
- Lois VanHoover.....Yellow Pine Resident
- Mark Woods .....Southern Idaho Timber Protective Association

Committee Meetings were scheduled and held on the following dates:

### **November 6, 2003**

William E. Schlosser, project director from Northwest Management, Inc., gave an overview of the company and general information about the development and planning of the Valley County Fire Mitigation Plan. Contact information was exchanged between members of the committee and Northwest Management, Inc.

Specific discussion items:

- **Schedule of meetings:** NMI would like to hold one meeting each month until the conclusion of the planning process. We would suggest the second Tuesday of each month. A lunch time meeting would be preferable if schedules allow. We can move the meeting location around as needed (McCall, Donnelly, Cascade). Most meetings will be concluded within one hour.
- **Map Products:** A variety of mapping products will be created during this planning process. John McGee and Lee Heinrich both have a set of current maps showing landowners, rural and wildland fire districts, past fires, and fire prone landscapes. Please take a look at them and provide any comments to refine the information. Especially evaluate the rural and wildland fire districts for boundary changes that may have occurred since the data was collected. The Donnelly Rural Fire District was voted on during the November 4, 2003, election. As of the time of map printing we did not know if this passed or not (hopefully it did!) Also, please make note of any communities that are not identified on the maps so that we can update the communities database. If additional GIS data is available (USFS-Fire Regime and Condition Class?), please provide it on disk to Dr. Schlosser.
- **Resources and Capabilities Guide:** Normally, we develop a county-wide booklet detailing the resources and capabilities of the Rural and Wildland Fire Districts protection services in each county. The Valley Interagency Interface Group Operations Plan seems to service this need very well. We suggest that we add to it, 8 1/2 x 11 district maps for each district and use this as the summary of the resources in the county. Please update any changes to this Operations Plan.
- **Fire Risk Assessments:** NMI wildland fire personnel are making site visits to all of the identified communities in the County. We are making observations about the fuels in each community, the access, developing potential treatments, and taking pictures. Each of the communities will have a FEMA Hazard Assessment form completed that details information in the FEMA format. We will also create a written summary of observations. If anyone has Fire Mitigation Projects identified please let us know so that we can integrate it into the County's Plan.
- **Public Involvement:** We want to encourage public participation in this planning process. If there are any members of the community that want to participate please invite them to do so. They need to attend the monthly meetings and provide feedback. This committee



(VIIG) is part of that process, therefore we need to keep a roster of those that attend meetings. Please include your e-mail address for announcements. We will also be sending out a public mail survey. We have received as high as 90% response rate on these survey averaging 60% in neighboring counties. The Valley County Assessor's office will be providing the mailing list of residents that we will randomly select names from. After the assessments are completed, we will hold public meetings in the county to share information on the process and facilitate public input. This will come before the draft plan is completed. The VIIG Committee will be the first to review this document, then it goes out the general public. After all comments are integrated into the revised document, it is give to the County Commissioners for final approval. This then becomes the County's Fire Mitigation Plan and we move into the implementation phase.

### **December 9, 2003**

NMI representative gave an overview of project status since last meeting and ask for any information the committee was able to produce so far.

Other items discussed included:

- Schedule of Meetings: Reminder, we would like to hold one meeting each month until the conclusion of the planning process. We are shooting for the second Tuesday of each month.
- Resources and Capabilities Guide: As part of today's meeting we would like a group discussion on the existing resources and needs for the County. This might be additional water tenders, pumper trucks, buildings, training, a new station house, anything that will increase the capabilities of the County's Fire Districts to meet the needs of wildland fire fighting in the County and provide for parity between the districts. We will discuss it at this meeting and come up with some ideas and recommendations to put into the plan.
- Fire Risk Assessments: During the week of December 8 -12, we have Tera Duman and Ken Homik doing field visits to all of the communities and subdivisions that have not yet been visited. They may be calling on some of the fire district personnel for added information. We will have their summaries available at the January meeting for review.
- Planned Activities: If you or your agency knows of any planned activities in terms of fire mitigation work scheduled for Valley County, please let us know so that we can include it in the final plan.

### **January 13, 2004**

*General Notes:* Next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, February 11 at the Cascade Rural Fire Station (109 E. Pine Street) in Cascade at 1:00PM.

The community assessments were discussed at length. Comments made by the committee included:

- Tyler Bentley - USFS: Communities missed for assessments: Patty Flat, Trails End (McLain (sp?) Ranch (South Fork), Big Creek Edwardsburg (1.5 hours past Yellow Pine), individual Ranches (at least mention the major ones), Taylor Creek Ranch (15 homes at end of airstrip)
  - VIIG – on internal USFS website – fire and aviation -2002 version. He will email electronic copy of document to Lee and/or Dr. Schlosser.
  - Update last 4 pages – equipment list – and email to John or Bill.

- Mark Woods: Need to clarify in the plan who is responsible for structural and/or wildland fires. Make the distinction.
  - Question on prioritizing communities and treatments – more political, let commissioners and group decide. Possibly just give top 5 or 10.
  - Question on FEMA forms – would like to see some clarification if possible. Write up paragraph with instructions.
- Tyler Bentley - USFS: Do we want to incorporate what Jeff Jones is doing? Possibly. Tyler indicated that what he has seen of Jeff's work does not necessarily match up with what is going on the ground.
- John Lillehaug – IDL: Why are the standards different between communities, ie spacing?
  - Yellow Pine: IDL spent \$80,000 in treatments and is not mentioned.
  - Will our comments be heard? Yes. Please provide for incorporation.
- Lee Heinrich - County Clerk: Not going to curtail process and impose artificial deadlines. Want a good product rather than meet a deadline.
- Mark Woods: VIIG has not been active in the last year. Has to dovetail with LAPC. Use operations guide as a tool to re-invigorate the group.

Comments on radio, communications, and other resource and capabilities items were also provided:

#### Narrow band radios

- James Haas – Cascade Rural fire: Has been working on gaining narrow band radios. Their district is having major problems with redundancy striking. He is also working on enhanced 911.
- Other Agencies:
  - IDL: will have soon.
  - USFS: has or is in transition.
  - SITPA: working on, not there yet

Solution: The committee suggested putting narrow band in hands of rural and in dispatch ICS.

Problems: will have to update twice: 1) narrow band, 2) narrow band digital. Also have a need for hardware and a common frequency use plan.

#### More Repeaters

- SITPA and USFS: no plans for more, don't need.
- Rurals: Need more. Repeaters may be adequate but Rurals need narrow band. Redundancy issue – have extra repeater in case one goes down.

#### Wireless Internet Connections

- Cascade Rural is working on a remote dispatch center, trucks, etc.

#### Fire District Boundaries

- City of Cascade – just annexed ½ square mile area, jurisdiction area change.

- Brundage Mtn. under contract.
- Homes outside of district want protection but district can't provide. There were no recommendations for those that live far way and un-accessible.

#### Water Storage

- James Haas: City of Cascade is working on storage, new lines, and new subdivisions.
- West Mountain Area: Older subdivision is becoming a problem due to the lack of building codes and other regulations. They also lack a water supply. Newer subdivisions in the area have new facilities (water, electrical, etc.).

#### Facilities

- All three districts have good facilities (newer buildings with meeting rooms), but may need additional equipment. They also have additional room for equipment storage.

#### Volunteer Retention

- Volunteers usually have full time jobs. Difficult to get time off from work to respond. Often lose promotions, vacation time, or their job. Small companies cannot afford people leaving for fire and rescue calls.

#### Training Opportunities

- Provide training, could use money to help pay for materials. 2 courses/year/district (6 weeks/course) \$2000/program. Coordinate between districts to reduce program costs? May get too much training, gets confusing, can't go to all.
- BDS training on different systems: ICS system for disaster services and ICS for wildland fire.
- All Risk Unified Dispatch System – sounds like it may be coming soon.

#### Disaster Preparedness

- No fatalities in the county this year. All felt there were very good personnel, mobilization, and communication. They have been very lucky. Fires started at the north end of county would have had different results if they had started in any other area. Need to look at where ignition occurred! Recognize that there has been a significant change where people live and how they live.
- Good mutual aid agreements.
- Need to update Rural, City, and wildland fire equipment lists. Boise has equipment in Cascade and Warm Lake. BLM doesn't provide any response in Valley County.

#### Misc. Comments

Email surveys to each member; send email to each fire chief asking what the equipment needs are.

Mark Wood's comments: What is the private landowners' responsibility for doing defensible space? How can they expect fire district to provide protection?

Document in county assessment that this community is at high risk and need a defensible space. Insurance company reads this and drops insurance for those homes. Who is liable?

Areas where fuel treatment projects have been completed: Yellow Pine, Jughandle, and Gods Acre.

## **March 30, 2004**

- Public Meetings will be held on April 6, 7, & 8 at 7pm
- Notice of meetings was placed in the Advocate & Star News
  - Haven't put the notice on Mountain Air Radio
  - Mr. Stuebner will put it in the Idaho Statesman after William Schlosser sends the notice out to e-mail list
  - Bill needs to send a copy of public meeting notice to e-mail list
- William Schlosser needs SITPA logo by Thursday (April 1)
- William Schlosser gave quick explanation concerning the signature page of the plan document and what would happen if an agency, fire department, etc. didn't sign
- The Forest Service is currently doing several different mitigation projects around Warm Lake because there is no fire protection in that area.

Dr. Schlosser gave the committee a preview of the public presentation and opened it up for discussion and comments. No additions or changes were made.

- The black area on one of the maps in the presentation is part of the wilderness area managed by the Salmon-Challis National Forest
- Committee members want to post a map at the public meetings that show the specific treatment areas recommended in the map
  - Need to make sure to say that they are proposed areas
  - Include a reference to agency responsible for treatment, so the meeting doesn't get bogged down in too much detail

## **June 18, 2004**

DR. William Schlosser	NMI
Dennis Thomas	NMI
Lee Heinrich	Court Clerk Valley County
Mark Woods	SITPA
Dusty Pence	USFS / Boise NF
Sam Hescock	USFS / Payette NF

Introduction and agenda / William Schlosser

Dr. Schlosser requested any additional edits be sent to NMI staff [Toby Brown, Terra Dunn, and Bill] by June 23, 2004.

Review of Valley County draft Plan and edits.

Dr. Schlosser asked group how the edits looked for the draft plan at this time.

Mark Woods thought the Plan looked good to date.

Lee Heinnich approved edit [4.2.1.4 Building Codes], County Commissioner will address future planning and zoning issues.

Dusty Pence will e-mail Dr. Schlosser changes to 4.6

Sam Hesock will provided write up's and edits up for 4.4.2.3.18 through 4.4.2.3.23

Big Creek-Edwardsburg, Trails End Subdivision, Taylor Range, Elk Creek, Yellow Jacket Range, Lake Fork Guard Station.

Sam Hescocock asked Bill what format he would like fire history.

Dr. Schlosser explained the relevance to provided the documentation of fire history to show that the county has a fire problem. And what format to send the data in.

Dusty Pence and Sam Hescocock will e-mail Bill data.

Sam Hescocock requested restructure paragraph 5.3 page 148.

Dr. Schlosser requested additional fuel reduction projects be e-mailed to NMI staff by June 23, 2004 before plan goes out to public review.

Sam Hescocock will sent all updated information by deadline date.

Dusty Pence commented that section 5.4 Warm Lake does not have a community water resource.

Dr Schlosser asked Lee Heinrich how long to put the document out for public review. Lee responded two weeks.

NMI will start working on the edits next week and have the plan ready for public review by the last week in June, 2004. public review will be completed by the middle of July, 2004. NMI will complete the edits from Public review the third week of July.

Lee Heimlich stated the last public meeting will be held at a regular commissioners meeting at the commissioners office.

Public will be able to review the plan at the following locations:

McCall	Cascade	Yellow Pine
County Court House		Post Office
USFS	USFS	
IDL		
SITPA		
Library		

NMI will prepare a press release before the public review.

Dr Schlosser led a discussion who will sign the document, for the different committee members.

Public survey revealed people would pay for some treatment, County to take lead. County Commissioner will resume responsibility to identify priority area's of treatment with input from Fire Committee.

Some discussion what the WUI is and Dr. Schlosser explained once the commissioner sign document they have identified the WUI.

Review of the infrastructure map. Committee Members identified additional infrastructure on Maps. NMI will updated at there GIS lab.

Dr. Schlosser thank individuals for attending the meeting. He encouraged committee members to e-mail all additional edits and changes to the draft by June 23, 2004

### **2.2.3.1 Public Meetings**

Public meetings were held during the planning process, as an integral component to the planning process. It was the desire of the planning committee, and the Valley County Commissioners to integrate the public's input to the development of the fire mitigation plan.

Formal public meetings were scheduled on April 6, 2004, at Cascade, Idaho, on April 7, 2004, at McCall, Idaho, and on April 8, 2004, at Donnelly, Idaho. The purpose of these meetings was to share information on the planning process with a broadly representative cross section of Valley County landowners. Both meetings had wall maps posted in the meeting rooms with many of the analysis results summarized specifically for the risk assessments, location of structures, fire protection, and related information. The formal portion of the presentations included a PowerPoint presentation made by Project Director, Dr. William E. Schlosser. During his presentations, comments from committee members, fire chiefs, and others were encouraged in an effort to engage the audience in a discussion.

It was made clear to all in attendance that their input was welcome and encouraged, as specific treatments had not yet been decided, nor had the risk assessment been completed. Attendees were told that they could provide oral comment during these meetings, they could provide written comment to the meetings, or they could request more information in person to discuss the plan. In addition, attendees were told they would have an opportunity to review the draft plan prior to its completion to further facilitate their comments and input.

The formal presentations lasted approximately 1½ hours and included many questions and comments from the audience. Following the meetings, many discussions continued with the committee members and the general public discussing specific areas, potential treatments, the risk analysis, and other topics.

Attendance at the public meetings included 11 individuals at the Cascade meeting, 5 in McCall, and 4 at Donnelly. The following are comments, questions or suggestions from the meetings:

#### **2.2.3.1.1 Cascade Public Meeting**

##### **April 6, 2004 – American Legion Hall – 7pm**

The meeting started with a presentation by Dr. William Schlosser. Dr. Schlosser presentation was aimed at informing the audience why the plans were being created, the congressional actions authorizing the plans, who had been involved at the local level in the planning committee, and the work accomplished. He stressed that the goal of the public meeting was to gather comments, ideas, and input from the public on the work that the committee had done to date. Comments made during the meeting would be noted and made part of the final plan document. Comments could also be made in writing to Dr. Schlosser at the Northwest Management office in Moscow Idaho.

Discussions took place during and after the presentation. The points of the discussions follow:

The High Valley area contains several subdivisions, but is not considered in the plan as a separate community. Discussion followed looking at the definition of a community and if the High Valley area required separate consideration. Consensus was it does not require separate consideration. There was some discussion as to who/how High Valley was covered by rural fire district or thru agreements with IDL/Gem County in Ola. The group would like to see some comment in the plan on how the High Valley area is covered for fire protection.

There was a general discussion on the problems that local volunteer fire departments face. The major issues cited were recruiting and keep young volunteers, equipment and budgets. No new

solutions to these dilemmas were voiced. Dr. Schlosser mentioned a piece of legislation working its way thru congress that would provide a 2% discount on home mortgage rates for volunteer firefighters.

There was a recommendation from the audience about widening high-tension powerline rights of way. This would reduce the hazard of trees falling into the lines and causing fires, or severing power to local communities. Wider powerline rights of way would also reduce the risk to wooden poles actually being destroyed during major fire events.

During fire responses or evacuations several of the secondary roads identified on the maps may not be wide enough to handle both evacuees leaving an area and emergency vehicles entering. Could these be looked at, and what standard width is necessary?

Additional dry season water sources around the WUI would help in initial response to fires. Local fire officials commented on the current location of large underground water tanks currently in place for fire response. During the dry season additional portable water bladders are placed around the county for use by fire trucks, but they do not work for helicopters. Additional ponds in the area would increase fire preparedness for both fire trucks and helicopters.

The meeting ended at 8:45.

#### **2.2.3.1.2 McCall Public Meeting**

##### **April 7, 2004 – American Legion Hall – 7pm**

The meeting started with a presentation by Dr. William Schlosser. Dr. Schlosser presentation was aimed at informing the audience why the plans were being created, the congressional actions authorizing the plans, who had been involved at the local level in the planning committee, and the work accomplished. He stressed that the goal of the public meeting was to gather comments, ideas, and inputs from the public on the work that the committee had done to date. Comments made during the meeting would be noted and made part of the final plan document. Comments could also be made in writing to Dr. Schlosser at the Northwest Management office in Moscow Idaho.

Discussions took place during and after the presentation. The points of the discussions follow:

The Elk Creek road from Warren (Idaho County) to Big Creek (Valley County) has been reopened. This road should be a secondary road on the infrastructure map. This would provide a second escape route from Big Creek. Also add the road to the Idaho County infrastructure map.

Phone lines as part of the necessary infrastructure of the county. People felt that any main fiber optic or phone lines that feed the communities were a vital part of the communications net needed during fires as well as an integral part of the modern economy. It was pointed out "you can't buy gas to get out of town if the phone lines are down, because the pumps won't take your credit card".

No one knew of any main gas transportation lines. The railroad south of Cascade is still active for tourist trains and should be included on the infrastructure map.

Idaho power has secured a permit from the USFS to add an additional high-tension powerline to the county. This line should be noted on the infrastructure map.

There was a general discussion on the state of the McCall rural fire district. The district appears to be well equipped and staffed. The fire districts biggest concerns are with narrow access roads/ driveways to homes, the heavy accumulation of fuels in and around some local communities/subdivisions and the lack of water access points to Lake McCall.

Access to water for fighting structure and wildland fires was discussed at length. Although many communities are on Payette Lake, there are a limited number of access points for trucks to draft water from the lake. An intriguing idea was for the fire districts to secure a fire patrol boat/portable hydrant. The boat would enable the districts to more easily patrol for fires in campgrounds along the lake, directly assist in fighting structure and wildfires adjacent to the lake, and in filling operations. Due to the narrow and slow access roads a boat would also have a faster response time to many communities around the lake. This idea could also be applied to the communities of Cascade and Donnelly on Lake Cascade.

The idea of a “Defensible space” denotes that someone else may be defending the space, or that all fire is bad. An audience member remarked that at a conference he attended in Nevada an Australian noted that they refer to them as “Asset protection zones” This presents more of a positive connotation that the intent is to protect an investment made in the structure or community.

### **2.2.3.1.3 Donnelly Public Meeting**

#### **April 8, 2004 – Donnelly Rural Fire District Firehouse – 7pm**

The meeting started with a presentation by Dr. William Schlosser. Dr. Schlosser presentation was aimed at informing the audience why the plans were being created, the congressional actions authorizing the plans, who had been involved at the local level in the planning committee, and the work accomplished. He stressed that the goal of the public meeting was to gather comments, ideas, and inputs from the public on the work that the committee had done to date. Comments made during the meeting would be noted and made part of the final plan document. Comments could also be made in writing to Dr. Schlosser at the Northwest Management office in Moscow Idaho.

During the presentation there were some comments made regarding pre-commercial thinning slash. A member of SITPA answered the question and explained the process by which forest management of slash from commercial and non commercial actions was regulated by the state. In this case he was able to directly answer the concern voiced and the mitigation taken by the landowner.

A general discussion regarding the current state of the Donnelly Fire District began after the presentation. The district was recently changed into a formal taxing district from a subscriber association. The general feeling was that the main firehouse was well equipped and had a sufficient volunteer staff. Concerns were raised that there was not a full time fireman at the station. There are currently no satellite stations in the Donnelly district. A new station will be built as part of the Tamarack subdivision to the southwest. To the North there is a desire to establish a substation at Lake Fork. Conversations continue in the community to make this a reality, but it is still in the planning stage.

Another discussion point was water availability for structure and wildland fire fighting. The idea of requiring new subdivisions to provide water systems (hydrants or tanks) for firefighting was put forward. This is something that could be implemented thru the local Planning and Zoning Commission.

The county is upgrading their building codes to international standard. As part of this upgrade there was public sentiment that requiring pretreatment for defensible space be included in the upgrade.

County bridges are inspected on a regular basis. If the bridge is unable to handle normal legal loads, they are posted. If a bridge is not deficient, it is not posted. Private bridges are not



inspected. It is left to the local fire districts to notify owners of private bridges that may not carry local fire trucks. It is not clear if this is being accomplished. The location of these private bridges has not been compressively located or mapped.

Some of the newer subdivisions are “gated communities”. Local fire districts and wildland firefighters are often not given the keys or codes to open these gates. These gates cannot be opened with a pair of bolt cutters and do pose an obstacle to fire response.

The meeting ended at 8:40pm

### **2.2.3.2 Meeting Notices**

Public notices of this meeting were printed in the **Advocate**, **Star News**, and the **Idaho Statesman** the weeks of March 28 and April 4, 2004. Notices were also posted at City Hall, County Court House, Idaho Department of Lands, and the office of the Payette National Forest’s McCall Ranger District.

#### **Valley County Wildfire Mitigation Plan Seeks Public Input**

**Cascade, Idaho**—The Valley County Commissioners created an Interagency Wildfire Mitigation Planning Committee to develop a Wildfire Plan for Valley County as part of the National Fire Plan authorized by congress and the Whitehouse. The Valley County Wildfire Mitigation Plan includes risk analysis at the community level with predictive models for where fires are likely to ignite and where they are likely to spread rapidly once ignited. Additional assessments include a resource and capabilities evaluation of the County’s city and rural fire departments, critical infrastructure, and policy at the county and city level. Northwest Management, Inc. has been retained by Valley County to provide wildfire risk assessments, mapping, field inspections, interviews, and to collaborate with the committee to prepare the plan. The coordination for this effort is being provided by Lee Heinrich, Valley County Clerk. The committee includes rural and wildland fire districts, land managers, elected officials, agency representatives, and others. Specialists are conducting analysis of fire prone landscapes and making recommendations for potential treatments at the community level. Specific activities for homes, structures, infrastructure, and resource capabilities will be proposed as part of the analysis.

The committee launched a public survey in February that is almost completed. Many area homeowners were asked to participate in this unique survey. Already over 65% of the 215 surveys have been returned. This information has been very useful in gauging public input to key factors of the plan.

Another important opportunity for the citizens of Valley County will happen in early April as the committee sponsors 3 public meetings. These evening meetings (7:00-8:30) are open to the public and provide an opportunity to learn about the wildfire risk assessments for Valley County and the preparedness of fire fighting agencies and departments to respond to wildfires. Potential treatment options will be discussed during these meetings. Public input is encouraged at the meetings as all gathered information will be included in the final plans. The schedule of the meetings is as follows:

April 6, Cascade – American Legion Hall, 105 E. Mill Street

April 7, McCall – American Legion Hall, (basement) 216 E. Park Street

April 8, Donnelly – Donnelly Rural Fire District Station, W. Roseberry Road

All meetings are from 7:00 P.M. to 8:30 P.M. For more information on the Fire Mitigation Plan project in Valley County contact your County Commissioner, Northwest Management, Inc.

project director Dr. William Schlosser (208) 883-4488, or the Valley County Clerk's Office, Lee Heinrich at (208) 382-7100.

## **2.3 Review of the WUI Wildfire Mitigation Plan**

Review of sections of this document were conducted by the planning committee during the planning process as maps, summaries, and written assessments were completed. These individuals included fire mitigation specialists, fire fighters, planners, elected officials, and others involved in the coordination process. Preliminary findings were discussed at the public meetings, where comments were collected and facilitated.

The results of these formal and informal reviews were integrated into a DRAFT Wildland-Urban Interface Wildfire Mitigation Plan. This plan was given to members of the planning committee on May 21.

Review of the DRAFT document by the Valley County Interagency Wildland Mitigation Planning Committee is scheduled to be made from this date until June 4, 2004.

From here we suggest that amendments and changes to this document be sent to Northwest Management, Inc. for inclusion in a revised plan. We will meet again on June 4 (location?) and discuss changes to the document. Please e-mail or fax edits to the Northwest Management, Inc. office directly ahead of the meeting so that we can discuss those changes in their entirety at the June 4 meeting. We can then schedule the public review to be released from June 8 – June 22. Again changes and modifications can be sent to Northwest Management, Inc. for inclusion in the final plan. The completed plan can be adopted by the County Commissioners on or after June 28, depending on the comments received and any actions needed as a result. *This is a suggested time frame only.* Suggestions and comments on this would be appreciated. The ultimate decision is made by the County Commissioners.

You can send comments directly to [Schlosser@consulting-foresters.com](mailto:Schlosser@consulting-foresters.com) or call Northwest Management, Inc. at 208-883-4488 fax at 208-883-1098.